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NSC BRIEFING

27 May 1958

~~GREEK ELECTIONS~~

- I. Victory of Karamanlis' National Radical Union (ERE) in 11 May national elections gave him majority in Parliament but rests on only 41 percent of popular vote.
- A. Communist-dominated United Democratic Left (EDA) polled nearly 25 percent of popular vote and now has 79 seats (up from 17).
- B. Center parties suffered severe blow which may mark beginning of end for once powerful Liberal party.
- C. [REDACTED] reports that King and Liberal leaders considering backing suit (brought by defeated Liberal candidates) to declare EDA a coalition and not a single party.
1. This would reduce EDA by 30-40 seats--which would go to Liberals. EDA would then be only third-ranking party.
- II. For immediate future Karamanlis should be able to maintain stable government, favoring NATO and a continuing close alignment with the West.
- A. But he will face increasing neutralist pressures from EDA.
- III. EDA may follow moderate policy initially, in an effort to achieve greater "respectability".
- A. But it is expected ^{eventually} to concentrate its strength on such matters as missile bases, Cyprus, and NATO alignments.
1. EDA will present itself as the nationalist-neutralist party of Greece.
- B. Between now and municipal elections in October, EDA will devote maximum effort on obtaining grip on municipalities throughout Greece.

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IV. Greek politics now polarized with ERE as champion of Western alignment, and EDA presenting itself as champion of neutralistic nationalism.

A. Both parties striving to attract what remains of political center.

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